

I think we're making progress. We understand where the power of this country lays. It lays in the hearts and souls of Americans. It must lay in our pocketbooks. It lays in the willingness for people to work hard. But as importantly, it lays in the fact that we've got citizens from all walks of life, all political parties, that are willing to say, "I want to love my neighbor. I want to make somebody's life just a little bit better." And for those of you who are doing that, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

And thank you for your warm welcome, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Austin Obasohan, principal, and Graham Boone, student council president, Concord Middle School; Phillip J. Kirk, Jr., chairman North Carolina State Board of Education; Mayor Patrick McCrory of Charlotte, NC; Mayor George W. Liles of Concord; Michael E. Ward, superintendent, North Carolina Public Schools; and Speaker of the House James B. Black and Senate President Pro Tempore Marc Basnight, North Carolina State Assembly. The President also referred to Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103-382), which amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89-10).

Remarks in a Meeting With the Parents of Petty Officer Third Class Steven Blocher in Concord

April 11, 2001

The President. I'm so honored that the Blocher family came to say hello. Obviously, when we were going to visit, we were just going to visit in a quiet way, a private way. Now that their son, Steven, will be coming home soon, I thought it would be appropriate for us to visit, and then visit some with the press.

These good folks are patriots, as is their son. It's a patriotic family. We had other family members served our country. Steven was one of the 24. I know they're thrilled he's coming home. But I'm so appreciative of how this family and the other families were steadfast in their patriotism and loyalty. They raised a boy who loves his country, and we owe a debt of gratitude to not only the service

men and women but to their parents, as well. So that's why I wanted to see you.

Robert Blocher. This morning worked out even better than we had hoped. It's an honor to meet the President, but to meet the President under such happy circumstances was more than we could ask the Lord for in any way.

The President. It's my honor to have you all. Thanks. We're watching very carefully; progress is being made, and that's very good news for this group of folks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. at Concord Middle School. Petty Officer Third Class Blocher is one of 24 crewmembers of the U.S. Navy EP-3E Aries II electronic surveillance aircraft being held by the Government of China after the aircraft made an emergency landing on China's Hainan Island due to a mid-air collision with a Chinese F-8 fighter jet over the South China Sea. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the Community in Greenville, North Carolina

April 11, 2001

The President. Thank you all. Thank you very much. Okay. Richard, thank you very much for your kind hospitality. I'm proud—I am proud to be an honorary member of the East Carolina baseball team. I am proud to be on this campus. I am proud to be in East Carolina, and I'm proud I've got so many friends in this great State.

It is such an honor to be here, and I want to thank you all for coming. I understand that some good folks spent the night last night here to be here. I promise not to speak so long so you will fall asleep. [Laughter] But I'm really thankful that you're here. I'm thankful to be out of Washington, DC, with the good, hard-working people of this part of our country.

Release of U.S. Navy Aircraft Crewmembers in China

I'm pleased to report that a commercial charter airplane is close to landing in Hainan Island.

Audience members. U.S.A! U.S.A! U.S.A!

The President. The plane is expected to leave that island in a couple of hours, bound